

Request for Council Action

Originator City Manager	Item Artistry's Strategic Direction and the City/Artistry Partnership
Agenda Section	Date 9/12/2016

Description

Early in 2016, Artistry executive director Andrea Specht approached the city manager to discuss strategic repositioning of the Bloomington-based arts organization. Artistry has been engaged in a strategic planning process and in recent years has made a number of changes that are transforming the organization, its artistic focus and offerings, and its financial position.

The City of Bloomington has a significant interest in the success of Artistry given its prominent role in producing theater, gallery programming, and arts education at the Bloomington Center for the Arts (BCA), and providing box office services for most of the non-profit arts organizations using BCA. In addition, Artistry is a key partner of the City's in South Loop creative placemaking efforts.

Artistry's board and staff leadership believe the future of the organization depends on its ability to develop engaging arts programming that reflects our contemporary society while honoring and maintaining some traditional and familiar pieces; attract a broader and more diverse audience to ensure growth in patrons and participants; and, continue growing a regional reputation that has produced recent rave reviews for artistic excellence. These priorities are in alignment with the City's strategic priorities for 2017-2020, particularly as they relate to Community Image and Diversity and Equity.

The transition from a traditional community theater/arts organization to a regionally celebrated and supported one will not occur overnight. Accordingly, ensuring a more predictable funding environment is critical if Artistry is to successfully navigate the next few years. Artistry believes that a "bridge" campaign to raise roughly \$1.5 million through 2020 is necessary to build the organization's capacity for marketing and development, move past break-even operating budgets, and create a working capital fund to better manage the financial volatility that is not unusual for arts organizations.

The bridge campaign proposed by Artistry is designed to help the organization move to a model where its annual operating budget is 60% earned revenue and 40% contributed (donor) revenue, and includes consideration of a supplemental cultural arts grant from the City of Bloomington to leverage contributions from individual and corporate donors.

The purpose of the discussion is to familiarize the City Council with Artistry's strategic priorities and the proposed bridge campaign and get direction on how to proceed in supporting this important community partner.

Item created by: City Manager
Presenter: James D. Verbrugge and Andrea Specht

Requested Action

Discussion

Attachments:

Artistry Memo.docx
Artistry by the Numbers 2016.pdf